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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the Arab press under Israeli occupation and presents two hypotheses: freedom of the press under occupation serves both Israeli interests and the Arab population, and freedom of the Arab press under occupation is "relative" and "controlled." By allowing freedom of expression, the Israelis achieve several aims: a free press will prevent the establishment of an underground press and will serve as an outlet for mass tension; a free press assures that the conflict over the future of the occupied areas will be kept in the forefront of Arab public opinion; extremist Arab writings are encouraged by Israeli authorities to justify their stronghold over the occupied areas and to convince the Israeli people that military suppression is the only way to keep normality; and the Arab press is manipulated as a channel of propaganda for Israeli achievements in the occupied areas. Although Arab editors see these facts as negative, they feel that there are positive aspects which can be exploited. They believe that the major role of the press under occupation is to keep the conquered Arabs well informed and enlightened with their morale high. (Author/RB)

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ALONG FREEDOM'S DOUBLE EDGE:
THE ARAB PRESS UNDER ISRAELI OCCUPATION

By

Munir K. Nasser

M.A. Candidate
College of Journalism
University of South Carolina

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I. Introduction

The Arab press under Israeli occupation represents a unique phenomenon in the history of the Middle East press. Several factors combine to make the study of this press worthwhile. While almost all Arab states--except Lebanon--do not have a free press, it is remarkably surprising to see freedom of the press flourish under occupation. At the same time, the Arab press in the West Bank of Jordan is a peculiar case in the history of military occupations. During the German conquest of Europe, the press was controlled by force, regulations and penalty. Under Israel, the conquered press today enjoys "relative" freedom to the extent of being allowed to voice demands for an end to the Israeli occupation and recognition of Palestinian rights.

The Arab press today is the only public outlet for the thoughts and feelings of the inhabitants of the occupied areas, who comprise more than one million, or one third, of the Arabs of Palestine. In the absence of any recognized political body in these areas and Israel's refusal to authorize political gatherings and associations of leaders and notables, the Arab press serves as the only forum for Arab statemsmen, functionaries and thinkers. Also editors, commentators and contributors of this press are in the unique position of not being obliged to toe the general line of Arab official policy.

The aim of this paper is to survey the Arab press under Israeli occupation and examine two hypotheses:

1. Press freedom in the occupied areas is a two-edged sword that serves both Israeli interests and the Arab population.
2. Press freedom in the occupied Arab territories is "relative" and "controlled".

The methods used for this purpose are several. First, there is an analysis of selected issues of Al-Quds, the major Arabic daily newspaper under Israeli occupation. Also, many observations are based on the writer's experience with the Arab press in Jerusalem before and after the June war of 1967 and on personal interviews with Al-Quds editors. Attention is given also to some pertinent literature dealing with military censorship and press freedom in Israel and in Jordan.

II. The Political Setting: 1967 War and After

When the Middle East war of June 1967 ended, Israel occupied territory equivalent to three times its pre-war size: the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank of Jordan, the Gaza strip and the Syrian Golan Heights. All these territories belonged to the three independent states of Egypt, Syria and Jordan. About one million Arabs remained under Israeli occupation, the majority of whom are still living in the West Bank of Jordan(See Table I).

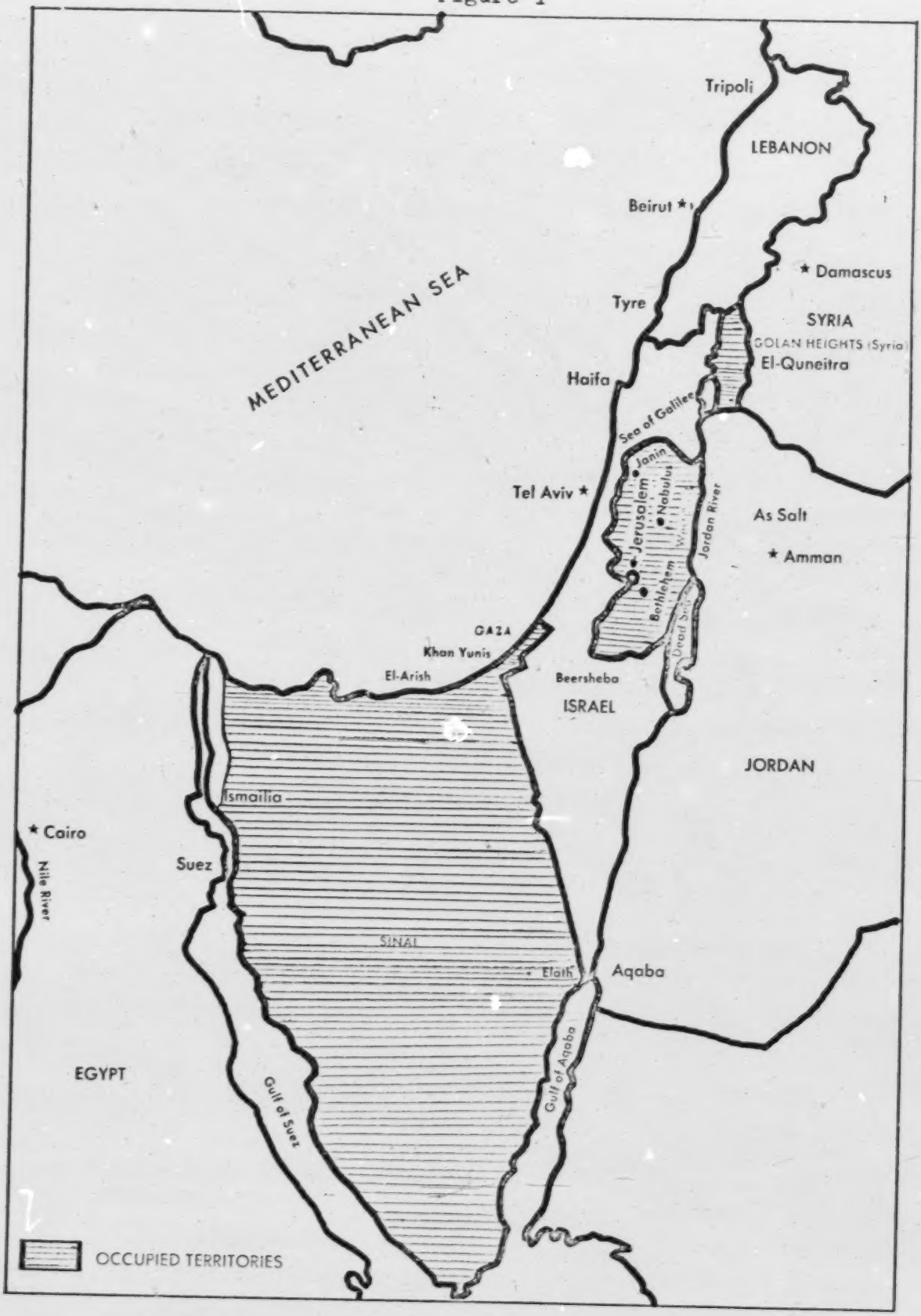
TABLE I

Occupied Arab Territories - 1972*

Territory	Area(square miles)	Population
West Bank	2,270	639,300
Gaza Strip	140	390,700
Sinai	23,622	
Golan Heights	444	n.a
Total	26,476	1,030,000

*Source: Israel Statistical Bureau, as cited in The Middle East and North Africa, 1973-1974, 20th edition, (Europa Publication Ltd., London, 1973), p. 376.

Figure I



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The "West Bank" is the short name for the portion of Palestine west of the Jordan River that was annexed in 1949 by the Kingdom of Jordan(See map in Figure I). The area of the West Bank is 2,270 square miles, and its population in 1966 was 900,000. The Israeli census of 1967 counted about 660,000, including 60,000 in Arab Jerusalem; thus, about 240,000 persons left the West Bank during and after the June War of 1967.[1]

Israel established military government over the occupied territories which are devided intc several military districts headed by Israeli military governors. Jordanian civil law remains in effect on the West Bank supplemented by Israeli military regulation.[2] The Arab sector of Jerusalem was officially annexed to Israel in June 1967 and is not considered by most Israelis as occupied territory. A law enacted by the Knesset(the Parliament) authorized the enlargement of municipal boundaries of Jerusalem and to apply the same legal jurisdiction and administration in force in Israel itself.[3]

Israeli occupation authorities carried out integration and annexation measures in the West Bank of Jordan. The Palestinian population has since been living under continuous physical and moral harrassment. Israeli security measures are ensured by swift punishment for members of the Palestine guerilla movement, destruction of houses of suspected guerrillas or their supporters. As the occupation has progressed such measures have become harsher and more arbitrary.[4]

The "open bridges" policy has been one of the pillars of the military rule in the occupied territories. Contacts of the local Arabs with the Arab world in general and with the East Bank of Jordan in

particular either in commerce or through visits on both sides have contributed to the normalization of the social system in the West Bank. The Arab population is exposed to different media of communication. They listen to the different radio stations of the neighboring Arab states, to the guerrilla broadcasts, and they watch different television stations from Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt.[5]

The creation of "facts" by Israel continued in the occupied territories throughout 1967-1973. It was announced in March 1973 that the Gaza Strip would be incorporated into Israel and that Jewish settlements in the Strip would continue. Statements by Israeli Ministers made it clear that in addition to Arab Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and Sharm al-Sheikh, all of which had been effectively annexed, the Golan Heights and substantial parts of the West Bank would not be returned. There was also increasing evidence on the ground. Forty-eight setllements had been established by mid - 1973, including 11 along the West Bank of the Jordan river, and a Jewish quarter in the Arab town of Hebron. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan suggested in early 1973 that individual Israelis should be allowed to buy land in the occupied Arab territories. The Jewish National Fund and the Israeli Lands Administration had aquired 15,000 acres of Arab land, and the army was in occupation of another 20,000 acres.[6]

An extensive building program to house new Jewish immigrants to Israel was rapidly being executed in and around Jerusalem. Within five years of the June War of 1967 the construction of large housing estates has transformed the appearance of the Old City and broken its historic skyline.[7]

The Israeli authorities in the annexed city are pursuing a policy with the distinct aim of erasing Arab culture, history and even Arabic language. School textbooks are being changed with strict concentration on Israeli and Jewish themes.[8] The October War of 1973, however, demonstrated that deep nationalistic feelings on the part of Jerusalem's Arabs are still very much alive. One manifestation of this was a sudden resurgence of guerrilla activity in Arab Jerusalem. Another signal of a change in mood was the extremely low Arab turnout in Jerusalem's municipal elections on December 31. In contrast with the large Arab participation in the previous elections in 1969, the vast majority of the city's Arabs now chose to ignore the elections in expectation of Jerusalem's possible liberation, Israel's image of invincibility having been tarnished by the events of the October War.[9]

A recent public survey has indicated that a clear majority of the West Bank Arabs strongly favors an independent Palestinian state. The survey was conducted before the October War of 1973 on behalf of the Israel Institute of Social Research. To a question about the future status of the West Bank in a peace agreement between the Arabs, and Israel, 44% said the West Bank should be part of an independent Palestinian state; 8%, a Palestinian state federated with Jordan; and 2%, a Palestinian state federated with Israel. Twenty percent opted for international status for the West Bank, 19% for return to Jordan, 3% for joint rule by Jordan and Israel and 2% for the status quo with Israel occupying the West Bank but having no sovereignty.[10]

Although there may be virtual unity of opinion in favor of liberation in the Jerusalem Arab community, there appears to be some dif-

ference of opinion regarding the status of the city in the future. According to the same public opinion survey recently conducted among the Arabs of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 35% of those interviewed favored the internationalization of the city; 33% asserted that Arab Jerusalem should be part of a Palestinian State; 7% wanted the city to be returned to Jordan; 6% believed that Jerusalem should be part of a Palestinian state federated with Jordan; 3% preferred to see a common government in the city by Israel and Jordan; and only 2% favored continued Israeli sovereignty.[11]

In the West Bank of Jordan, a near-unanimous antagonism seems to exist toward the Hashemite monarchy, but also a true desire not to get separated from Jordan. The Amman authorities in turn are opposed to schemes for political representation to be set up in the West Bank by Israel because they are afraid such an initiative would reinforce the separatist aspirations that have made their appearance there since the massacre of "Black September" of 1970 in which the Jordanian army crushed the Palestinian guerrilla movement in the East Bank.[12]

III. Arab Press in Israel Before 1967

During the British mandate, Palestine was a special case in journalism. No other area with a population of two million of whom at least 30% were illiterate could boast of 18 morning dailies, 3 evening papers and a host of weeklies and monthlies.[13]

Of the four Arabic language dailies that were being published just before the end of the British mandate in May 1948, Falastin was the oldest. Established in 1911, it was nationalist in policy and owned

by the Christian family of Al-Issa from Jaffa. Al-Diffa' was established in 1932 and was nationalistic in policy and read by both Moslem and Christian Arabs.[14]

Pre-publication censorship during the British mandate on Palestine provided that all copy go to the censor before printing except for news, sports and ads. Five papers were suspended temporarily for running anti-government editorials, usually without submitting them for prior censorship. Under the Palestine press law of 1933, the High Commissioner of Palestine also had the power to suspend publication of newspapers which continue to publish matter which was in his opinion likely to endanger the public peace.[15]

After the establishment of Israel in 1948, the same press law of 1933 was adopted by the Israeli government, with some amendments. Moreover, the Israeli government continued to enforce the Emergency Regulations of 1945 which empowers the authorities to impose censorship on newspapers and to suspend newspapers for a specific period or to close them altogether.[16]

The Arab minority that stayed in Israel after 1948 had a tough time keeping a private and independent Arab press. Although Arabic is a major language in Israel, circulation of the Arab press has always been low. This is due to the fact that many Arabs are radio-oriented and very possibly distrust the Jewish editors of the Arabic papers.[17]

A major characteristic of the Arabic language press in Israel is that all newspapers and periodicals are directly attached to political parties or organizations. The Histadrut (the Israel Labor Union) supported financially the only Arab daily, Al-Yom, from 1948 until

it was folded and replaced by Al-Anba' in 1968. The Mapam party issues Al-Mirsad, the Arabic weekly that has followed closely the party line since 1951. This weekly reflects a policy of befriending the Arab minority in Israel and calls for granting them full social and economic equality. The Israeli Communist party has issued the Arabic bi-weekly Al-Ittihad since 1944. This paper is more like an Arab newspaper than the others. This is noticeable in its editorial board, contributers, polished style and political orientation. Although it sometimes publishes literary work of non-communist Arabs, Al-Ittihad is generally geared to the party propaganda. This newspaper carried out sharp attacks on the Israeli official policy labeling it as Machiavellian and tuned to imperialist western interests.[18]

IV. Press in Jordan Before 1967

There was no daily press in Jordan until after the Palestine War of 1948. That war ended the Palestine Arab papers, but they were supplanted by new dailies in Amman and Arab Jerusalem.[19]

Before the June 1967 war, Jordan had five daily papers and the publishing center of the country was the Old City of Jerusalem. Just before the war, the Jordanian government proposed that the five papers be reduced to three--two in Arabic and one in English--with the government holding a 25 percent ownership in each paper. Before the new law could go into effect, however, the war intervened and changed the entire press picture.[20]

The press in Jordan was more a vehicle of opinion than of information, and often more of political propaganda than of opinion.

Government control over the press was manifested in many different ways: An application to licence a newspaper can be rejected by the government; the suspension of the licence of an existing newspaper is a frequent practice.[21]

The general tendency has been to make the press in Jordan more obedient to the wishes of the government, and at the same time to make journalism as a profession more difficult.[22] The press in Jordan until now contains little criticism of government officials and no criticism of the royal family.[23]

In early 1967 there were six dailies, one in Amman (Al-Urdun) and five in Jerusalem (Al-Diffa', Falastin, Al-Jihad, Al-Manar, and the English language daily Jerusalem Star). In March 1967 the new press law in Jordan reduced the number of newspapers to three. Al-Manar and Falastin were forced to amalgamate and publish Al-Dustour in Amman; Al-Jihad and Al-Diffa' joined forces to form Al-Quds in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Star stayed in Jerusalem and came to be known in its final transfiguration as the Palestine News.[24]

This imposed policy of amalgamation irritated editors of these newspapers who submitted unwillingly to the will of the government. Many observers saw in this move on the part of the government a tendency towards exerting more press control and creating vacuum in Jerusalem by shifting emphasis to the Capital Amman. In the New Middle East of March of 1972, Mohammad Abu-Shilbayeh, an Arab journalist from Jerusalem, wrote:

> ...we can define the prime objective of Jordanian rule in Jerusalem as one of creating a vacuum there. For one thing, this rule transferred everything to Amman - the newspapers, the larger enterprises and the institutions of learning. After the June war of 1967 the vacuum was filled by Israel.

But in many ways this was done so as to safeguard Israel's interests rather than those of Arab inhabitants.[25]

V. Arab Press Under Occupation: Overview

The Arab press in the West Bank of Jordan ceased publication two days before the fall of Arab Jerusalem to Israel in June 1967. Al-Yom, the official Israeli newspaper, was the only Arabic daily available on the newsstands in the postwar period. This paper did not appeal to readers in the occupied territories and in the fall of 1968 was replaced by another official paper Al-Anba'. This paper was intended to fill a void in the Arab sector of Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank of Jordan.[26] Al-Anba' is considered by many observers as the ward of the prime minister's office and a more accurate guide to government policy than any other Hebrew newspaper.[27]

A number of Arabic daily and weekly newspapers and magazines started publication under occupation between 1968-1972. The following survey offers a quick glimpse of the Arabic newspapers that appeared under occupation. A case study of Al-Quds will be elaborated in full in the following chapter.

1. Al-Basheer (The Herald): An independent weekly newspaper which belongs to Ibrahim Handal, a businessman from Bethlehem. It was first published after the civil war in Jordan in September 1970. It attracts young writers who never had the chance in the Jordanian times, but now appear on the Israeli television, say what they like, and have the foreign correspondents copying it all down.[28]

Of all the Arabic papers under occupation, Al-Basheer is the most moderate in tone, though it has been consistently critical of

the occupation and the policies of the military government.

Al-Basheer publishes Saturday, but sometimes publication is disrupted for a few weeks due to financial and technical problems. It circulates about 3,000 copies and prints on six pages of the standard 8-column size.

2. Al-Fajr (The Dawn): An independent weekly edited and owned by Joseph Nasr, who holds a master's degree in linguistics from an American university. Al-Fajr appeared in late 1971 and attracted a large audience for its militant attacks on King Hussein and the Jordanian regime.

Since it was intended to voice the aspirations for a Palestinian entity, Al-Fajr is outspokenly anti-Jordanian. It consistantly pleads for the establishment of a Palestinian state without any attachment to Jordan and firmly opposes continuation of the Israeli occupation. Thus it constantly calls for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied areas and condemns creating facts fy means of Jewish settlement. It has consistently justified the existence and activities of the guerrilla organizations but opposed their extremism because it prevents real achievements. Al-Fajr has all the hallmarks of an ideological newspaper, and consequently it is the most extreme of the journals. It serves as a forum for philosophers and advocates of the idea of the Palestinian entity.[29]

Al-Fajr's circulation is estimated at 9,000 copies. At present, it appears every Saturday in six pages, and Nasr is preparing plans to change it to a daily newspaper. Al-Fajr carries little advertising, which has led many observers to assume that it must have secret finan-

cial sources to cover costs for production and for the newly established printing plant in Jerusalem.

3. Al-Sha'b (The People): A daily newspaper published and owned by Mahmoud Ya'ish, an old newspaper business manager from Jerusalem. The paper was founded in July 1972 as a commercial enterprise designed to enrich its owner; but in order to win favor with readers and to compete successfully with Al-Quds, it rode the wave of opportunism. Thus it is now purchased by readers whose educational level is below average. This leads the paper to take extreme positions in order to increase circulation.[30] Al-Sha'b is printed on regular four pages and circulates about 6,000 daily copies and 10,000 copies on Friday, the Moslem Sabbath.

Magazine publishing does not appeal to many local editors. This is because they cannot compete with the imported Arabic magazines that circulate in the occupied territories with the permission of the Israeli authorities. The only local Arabic magazine still in circulation is Falastin medical magazine. It is a monthly publication dealing with health and science and edited by an Arab pharmacist from Ramallah.

A few other publications have been discontinued due to financial and technical difficulties. Alwan, the social and literary monthly magazine, was forced to cease publication after the Israeli authorities allowed for non-political magazines to be imported from the Arab countries. Alwan used to depend heavily on articles copied from the Lebanese and Egyptian press.

Another monthly magazine Fatat Falastin died a few months after it

started publication. This magazine became involved in libel and defamation incidents which led its editors into the courts.

Almost all of these publications--with the important exception of Al-Quds--share the following generalizations:

1. Editorial staffs are small and poorly trained.
2. Newspaper plants are small and poorly equipped.
3. Circulation is usually small.
4. Attack on Jordan is part of their policy.
5. Shallow coverage of local and foreign news.
6. Subsidized by "unknown sources."
7. Poor reproduction of type and photographs.
8. Interruption of publication for financial and technical problems.

VI, Al-Quds: A Case Study

Al-Quds (The Holy City) was the first Arabic-language daily to start publication under occupation. As soon as fighting ended in June 1967, Mahmoud Abu-Zuluf, one of the three owners of Al-Quds, had the foresight to apply to the Israeli authorities to resume publication. Both Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and Jerusalem's Mayor Teddy Kollek favored the idea, and so, despite reservations from certain quarters, the permission was duly granted in December 1968.[31] Abu-Zuluf, thereupon, became the editor as well as the owner of the only Arabic-language daily addressing itself to the inhabitants of the occupied areas and published by a non-Israeli Palestinian Arab.

Abu-Zuluf is a tall and rich man from Jaffa, now a suburb of Tel Aviv. He owns a fine stone building outside the ancient wall of the

Holy City. This structure contains the editorial offices of the newspaper and a printing plant which includes modern typesetting machines such as linotype and intertype This plant is used also as publishing house to print books and newspapers for other press institutions.

1. Editorial Policy: Under occupation, Al-Quds started a new policy which it never enjoyed under Jordanian rule. Its first editorial set the broad lines of its policy, calling for an end to the Israeli occupation and recognition of the Palestinian national rights. It was independent from both the Jordanians and the Israelis. From the the beginning, Abu-Zuluf took advantage of the freedoms in Israel, but in general he maintained a moderate policy and never went to the extreme except when Palestinian rights were endangered.

Al-Quds consistently opposes Israeli rule in Jerusalem and in the occupied areas. It also opposes the creation of "facts" in these areas but does not advocate nullification of the unity of Jerusalem. It favors a political settlement in the city with a view to making it the capital of both Israel and a Palestinian state. In the past, unlike other Arab papers, Al-Quds expressed strong reservations about Arab guerrilla operations, such as those at Lydda and Munich, and urged moderation in the guerrilla organizations' political demands.

Al-Quds is known to be a supporter of King Hussein's federation plan. This general support for the King finds expression on its pages, though on many occasions the paper criticized the King and his regime, which led many observers to see this as an attempt to camouflage its support. In September 1970, the Jordanian army managed to crush the Palestinian guerrilla organizations on the East Bank, a development

which "induced despair in many hearts and planted terror in many souls. A strange, fearful atmosphere reigned in Jerusalem and elsewhere, with many becoming convinced that King Hussein was soon to come back with his terror.[32] Al-Quds started to veer openly towards Amman.

Several hints that Al-Quds is receiving financial help from the Jordanian Government were never fully substantiated. Earlier in 1973, in the course of a program on the Arab press of the occupied areas, a reporter on Israel Television stated matter-of-factly that Al-Quds was in the pay of the Jordanian authorities. Abu-Zuluf reacted promptly by threatening libel action against the reporter and the Israel Broadcasting Service unless a formal apology was forthcoming from both. Nothing further has been heard about it since. However, by a combination of professional and political judgement, Abu-Zuluf has managed to achieve a deficit-free budget for Al-Quds. His critics, however, would insist that this hardly rules out the possibility of his getting or even soliciting extra income from Amman.[33]

2. Staff: Al-Quds is run by 40 staff members employed as editors, translators, monitors, typesetters and printers. The general assignment reporter in the western sense is rarely used, but local correspondents (stringers) are kept in the major towns of the West Bank. These stringers are usually inexperienced reporters and turn in poor copy. Al-Quds has no foreign correspondents. Its major supply of foreign news comes from press associations. It officially subscribes to United Press International, including its wire-photo service. Many regional Arab news agencies are monitored and included in the news content without referring to the source.

The editorial staff of Al-Quds are university graduates with the exception of the publisher-chief editor, Abu-Zuluf. Only one editor holds a degree in journalism, while others have degrees in economics, political science, history, Arabic language and physical education.

In 1968, with the help of two veteran journalists, Abu-Zuluf formed an editorial board to run the newspaper. They were Muhammad Abu-Shilbayeh, a left-wing writer, and Yousef Najjar, a school teacher and caligrapher who has a lively Arabic style. Abu-Shilbayeh spent five years of his life in Jordanian prisons and has been labelled a socialist and communist. After 1967 he stayed in Jerusalem to appeal to Arabs and Israelis for a Palestinian state on the West Bank. He has written many articles for Al-Quds, telling people that despite occupation perhaps Israel can do for the Palestinians what King Hussein cannot. He thinks that Israelis have open minds and a democracy which Arabs should utilize. The first Arab to utter such things in public, he has displayed uncommon courage.[34]

Abu-Shilbayeh's association with Al-Quds was unceremoniously suspended. Later he moved to Al-Anba', where his articles still appear to the present time. Privately Abu-Shilbayeh has suggested that it was Jordan's pleas and threats, backed perhaps by other means of persuasion, that finally weighed the scales against him in his relations with Al-Quds.[35]

3. Circulation: Al-Quds has a circulation of 20,000 copies on weekdays and about 30,000 on Friday, the official Moslem day off. It is circulated in the West Bank, Gaza strip, Israel, and a few copies reach Jordan and other Arab countries. The actual circulation exceeds

these figures as the same copy is shared by more than one person. It has been said in the Arab world that the written word is particularly sacred. If the radio and television have become major competitors with the press, it is still true that a newspaper is especially respected in the rural areas where a single copy of a newspaper will be passed around and read aloud.[36]

4. Advertising: Al-Quds publishes much advertising which on certain occasions exceeds the normal ratio of 60%. The publisher is always cautious not to allow the editorial policy of Al-Quds to interfere with the flow of incoming advertising. His general policy is to be on good terms with commercial institutions. A great deal of income is derived from advertising Israeli products. Another main source of income is from the daily announcements of obituaries published on the front and last pages with heavy black lines. Abu-Zuluf had always told his editors that business interests of the newspaper come before nationalistic and political interests.[37]

5. Make-up: Al-Quds maintains a handsome layout and sound typography. It has a horizontal front page make-up and prints on the standard 8-column page format. Column rules are used to separate different stories. Headlines are streamlined and written by a special caligrapher. Al-Quds, however, recently introduced the headline typesetting machine Ludlow to replace the annoying job of caligraphy. The full page banner is still used for dramatic events, but normally a 4-5 column streamer in red ink is used. The "Al-Quds" nameplate is placed at the top center of the front page, leaving two ear boxes to be used for last minute news or advertising. Two-column ads are used to anchor

the bottom corner of the front page, a peculiar technique typical of the Arab press. Small stories are placed to fill holes in the form and help avoid tombstoning, the danger of headlines running side by side.

It is worth mentioning that Arabic is a very condensed language. Ideas in this language could be expressed in about one third the number of words it would take to say them in English.[38]

6. Censorship: All material must be cleared by the military censors prior to publication. Headed by a colonel, the main censorship office in Tel-Aviv has a staff of about 30 and is open 24 hours every day of the year. The Jerusalem censorship office has about 10 personnel, who are career army officers, enlisted men and civilians.[39] The government rule is that criticism is permitted so long as there is no incitement to subversion.[40] Many articles are suppressed without giving any explanation. Ghassan Tahboub, the columnist and feature editor of Al-Quds, said that when it comes to security matters it is impossible to argue with the censor, who would say such an article would endanger the security of the State. This attitude led many writers to use vague statements and leave it to readers to read between lines.[41] Moreover, when the censor does not forbid the publication of certain material, he sometimes demands changes which distort the meaning. The military censor once deleted a couplet from a poem because it contained the word "endurance"--a word, so the censor believed, frequently used by the Palestinian Resistance Organizations.[42]

Al-Quds editors, however, have a list of subjects which fall under security surveillance. These include stories on Israeli troop

movements, military installations and noting names of officers in front lines for fear of possibly endangering them should they be taken prisoners.[43] The list includes also topics such as incitement to strikes, boycotting local elections and Israeli goods.

Many editors note that the security of Israel is interpreted in an extremely broad manner and is not limited to military security. Censorship has been imposed on news about Jewish immigration into Israel to avoid pressure from certain Eastern European countries to put a stop to Jewish emigration from their territories. Similarly, in March 1970 the government decided to censor news items pertaining to the movements of oil tankers to and from Israel.[44] The press usually complies with these rules willingly, but foreign correspondents have challenged the use of censorship to prevent publication of details of Russian Jews immigration and of Israel's oil production in occupied Sinai.[45] It sometimes happens--especially during war or political crisis--that foreign correspondents leave Israel for the nearest country, generally Cyprus or Greece, sending their reports from there and returning to Israel to resume their activities, without any interference from the authorities.[46] In explaining this, the censorship officer claims that in view of Israel's precautious security situation laws applicable to news reporting in other countries are not relevant.[47]

VII, A "Controlled" Free Press

A major event that took place in April 1973 put the Arab press in a critical position and raised many questions about the alleged press freedom. While angry demonstrations were being staged in Beirut and other Arab capitals and loud calls for revenge were being shouted, the

Palestinians of the occupied areas quietly mourned the three leaders of the guerrilla organizations who were killed in the Lebanese capital by an Israeli commando force. On the following week, as the mass funeral procession marched through the main streets of Beirut, church bells tolled in unison in many parts of the occupied areas. In Birzeit, a small olive town north of Jerusalem, a memorial service was held at the Evangelical Church for one of the three Palestinian leaders killed in Beirut, Palestine Liberation Organization spokesman Kamal Nasser. He was a native of Birzeit, where his family still lives, and a poet who was well-known throughout the Arab World. The service was attended by multitudes from all over the occupied areas. At the same time, the local Arab press carried hundreds of mourning notices placed by municipal councils, schools, prominent families and individuals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip describing the three leaders as martyrs. On the following Friday, a memorial service was conducted in all mosques of the occupied areas.

Comment in the local Arab press was somewhat more subdued than in other parts of the Arab World though the under tone was by no means less bitter. Ghassan Tahboub wrote a mourning article in Al-Quds in which he emotionally urged his fellow Palestinians to struggle for a better future. "The memorial service held at the church in Birzeit to commemorate the death of Kamal Nasser," he wrote, "constituted a message to the nations of the world and to our leaders who huddle in their palaces and offices - a message to the effect that this people cannot die." If the Japanese believe in transmigration of the soul, he added, the Palestinians were implementing this belief in practice.[48]

The military censor sent a threat to Abu-Zuluf with new orders to submit for censorship every single item, including ads, obituary notes, and crossword puzzles. As a result, Ghassan Tahboub was forced to discontinue writing for several weeks.[49]

Al-Sha'b, usually more outspoken, deplored in its editorial on the same day the undue boastfulness of the Israelis and warned that the myth of Israel's invincibility was dying out. Arab leaders have said repeatedly that the era of myths and miracles had gone. Al-Sha'b then asked the leaders of Israel "to abandon their talk about peace and their desire for peace--since peace can never be achieved by blood-letting."[50]

As for the Bethlehem weekly Al-Basheer, the Beirut operation "constituted a new and clear proof of Israel's determination to maintain the present state of conflict so as to be able to impose her policy of 'fait accompli', build more settlements and keep unified Jerusalem as Israel's capital." "For Israel, hunting of the Palestinians and shedding their blood is all law and justice," Al-Basheer wrote, "but when Palestinians act to obtain their legitimate rights, they are terrorists, murderers, and criminals."[51]

The most outspoken reaction to the Beirut raid, however, was that of Al-Fajr. A quarter of its first page, framed in black, carried a portrait of Kamal Nasser. The lead story claimed that the raid resulted from Israel-Jordan collusion with the help of the CIA. The story reported the part played by Jordanian military intelligence and the United States Vice-Consul General in Jerusalem in the Beirut operation with details of meetings held in Eilat by leading Jordanian and Israeli

intelligence officers in which their work was coordinated and certain information concerning the guerrilla leaders was passed on to the Israelis.[52] Nasr admitted later that he fabricated the whole story to gain more popularity for his newspaper.[53]

Failure to submit this alleged story to Israeli censorship was to cost Joseph Nasr and his deputy editor, Jamil Hamad, two weeks of detention. The charges to be brought against them were never made clear. Failure to submit a story touching on matters of security to the censor is usually dealt with by a reprimand or fine but never with detention, except in this instance. In attempting to explain the arrests, therefore, the authorities pointed out that the reason was not the breach of censors rules but "incitement." When they felt they were unable to define the term--especially in view of the fact that all Arab papers contained material liable to go under the same heading--the authorities explained that the two journalists were being detained so that their work methods and their sources of information could be examined more fully.[54] Muhammad Abu-Shilbayeh, however, explained the detainment of Al-Fajr editors in a different way. He believed the Israeli authorities, by arresting these editors, exploited this incident to the fullest extent and contributed to the wide circulation of the news. These authorities, he continued, took advantage of this incident to strengthen their tight hold over the Arab population.[55]

School papers were also put under strict censorship. Following the Israeli raid on Beirut, the censor suppressed the editorial of Al-Ghadeer, the student newspaper of Birzeit College, the only institution of higher learning in the West Bank. Al-Ghadeer published a mourning issue for

Kamal Nasser, a 1941 graduate of the College. The censor prevented the publication in this issue of three nationalist poems taken from his collection.[56]

Israeli authorities were shocked with this attitude because of their assumption that the Arab population was satisfied with occupation. Brigadier-General Vardi, military Governor of the West Bank, told the New Middle East in June 1973 that "these reactions were to a certain extent different from what we had been used to in the past. We have never witnessed a reaction such as this and on such a wide scale." Over the past years, he added, the Arab population has come to know and accept the freedom of expression allowed them by the military government and that this itself was a factor in the outburst of sympathy shown after the Beirut raid.[57]

One of the most significant phenomena to emerge from the October war of 1973 has been the mass outburst of nationalist feeling on the part of the Palestinians, including those in the occupied territories. What sparked it was the war itself, which raised the morale of the Arab world in general and the Palestinians in particular. The nationalist fervour was fanned by the Arab summit conference in Algiers, which stressed the independence of the Palestinian entity and endorsed the umbrella of the guerrillas, the Palestine Liberation Organization(PLO), as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

The October war and the recognition by the Algiers conference of the Palestinian entity represented by Yasser Arafat have led to the upsurge of political activity among the Palestinians of the occupied territories. Both the entity and the PLO leadership have been controversial

matters, not only in relation to the situation vis-a-vis Israel, but because part of the population feels an affinity to Jordan.

The political activity in the occupied territories has been undertaken mainly by those pro-PLO elements seeking to establish the image of an independent Palestinian entity in face of Israel's refusal to recognize the PLO as anything but a terrorist movement and Jordan's claim to be the Palestinians' spokesman.[58]

The excitement of the population mounted as the international results of the October war became clearer. Use of the oil weapon by the Arabs and steps to impose a settlement by the great powers on the basis of United Nations' Resolution 242 of 1967 raised hopes for the immediate future, where before the war even men of 35 or 40 were resigned to seeing no improvement in their lifetime.[59]

As a result of this outburst of nationalist feeling many incidents were reported on the West Bank, such as the closure of schools as a gesture of Arab solidarity, painting of resistance slogans and even petrol bomb attacks on Israeli tanks. In mid November 1973, some Israeli troops were pulled back from the front to strengthen security arrangements in the West Bank after a knife attack on three Israeli soldiers, one of whom was killed, in the town of Ramallah. Early in December, 20 persons were hurt in an East Jerusalem street when a grenade was thrown into a group of Israeli soldiers, and on December 8 the Israeli military governor of Nablus was injured by a grenade thrown into his car. The Israeli authorities retaliated on December 10 by deporting eight prominent Palestinians accused of "subversive activity."[60] They were forced to walk blindfolded into the east bank of Jordan. One, the mayor of

Bireh, was beaten and his arm injured by the Israeli soldiers because he refused to leave voluntarily. In Jenin, Israeli security forces blew up the houses of five men suspected of aiding guerrillas.[61]

During the following week, the West Bank witnessed public activities in protest against the deportation. In Jerusalem, police detained 11 of a group of over 100 Arab women who staged a march protesting the deportation. On December 15 the authorities closed Birzeit College, which they regarded as "hotbed of instigation and agitation" against them. The College was reopened two weeks later, but the College student publication Al Chadeer was not allowed to resume publication unless the College obtained an official license from the military authorities. The College was accused of publication for several years of an "illegal pro-terrorist newspaper".[62] A statement by the Board of Trustees of Birzeit College, published in Al-Quds, rejected these accusations and said "the College student publication is mentioned in the official College catalogue, printed at a commercial press and regularly read and approved by the Israeli military censor."[63]

During the war period, the Arab-language newspapers continued to publish, but a strict censorship was imposed. A chief editor of one of these papers told Oliver Todd, correspondent of Nouvel Observateur in Jerusalem, "yes, there is severe censorship. I do not write editorials anymore, I just cannot express myself freely."[64]

In the period following the war, the Arab newspapers suffered severe setbacks in their staffs as a result of their editorial policies. Al-Quds suffered the largest number of casualties. On January 1, 1974, eleven members of the staff of Al-Quds left their jobs in protest against

the Jerusalem Municipal election advertisement run in the newspaper on behalf of Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek. The workers objected to the newspaper being involved in any way in the election.[65]

On February 9 Al-Fajr reported that its editor, Joseph Nasr, has been missing from his East Jerusalem home since February 6.[66] Investigation of Israeli police led to the arrest of five persons from the West Bank who were suspected of kidnapping Mr. Nasr. Police sources believe the kidnapping has some connection to the editorial policy of Al-Fajr in which Mr. Nasr supports the Palestinian guerrilla organizations and editorially attacks members of the West Bank leadership loyal to King Hussein of Jordan.[67] At this writing, no development was announced in this case.

The last casualty on the list was Mohammad Abdul-Salam, an Al-Fajr reporter who was sentenced by an Israeli court to four years' imprisonment for agreeing to spy for Jordanian intelligence. Abdul-Salam was arrested by Israeli police in August 1973 while crossing to the East Bank of Jordan. He was accused of hiding films and other espionage materials about Israeli military installations in the West Bank.[68]

Despite all these setbacks and the severe censorship, the Arab press continued to serve as the only outlet for expression in the occupied areas. Al-Quds proved to be a real public forum for the suppressed masses to discuss the issues. Following the October war, Abu-Zuluf threw open his columns for public debate. The first contribution was an interview with Anwar Khatib, last Governor of East Jerusalem before 1967. He appealed to his fellow Palestinians not to place obstacles on the road to negotiations. He insisted that the people of Palestine are alone en-

titled to define the"rights of Palestinians" and that no other party, no matter how powerful or elevated, should try to do so. When asked how the Palestinians could give expression to their views, Khatib replied that the PLO was capable of forming the nucleus for this purpose, provided its ranks were representative of the various groups of Palestinians wherever they were--"especially those who have lived throughout these years under the occupation, and who have acquired a great deal of experience."[69]

Hamdi Kana'an joined the great debate. Although he no longer holds public office, Kana'an was for many years the mayor of Nablus, the West Bank's biggest and most nationalistic town. He is one of its richest and most influential men. In his articles in Al-Quds, he advocated an independent sovereign state on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. First, Israel should withdraw. Then a referendum would be organized under United Nations or Arab League supervision. Unlike Khatib, he came out openly against any special link with Jordan. "It goes without saying that the proposed state shall not be under the crown of the Hashemites, though it may conceivably choose to be confederated with Jordan on an equal basis of full sovereignty," he wrote.[70]

The most extreme writing which the Israelis could not stomach was an article written by Abdul-Muhsen Abu-Maizar, a Jerusalem lawyer in his mid-forties before he was deported to the East Bank of Jordan with other Arab notables for alleged subversion. A peace agreement, he argued, must be seen as a phase in a continuing struggle. A final and radical solution was plainly impracticable at this juncture. He wrote:

> Our goals at this phase, are confined to the political aspects of our rights. They do not deal with the national and historical aspect of these rights - an aspect which under no circumstances be touched or harmed since they are the property of no particular generation or state or leader.[71]

VIII. Occupation And Press Freedom

Incidents described in the preceeding chapters tend to support the belief that freedom of the Arab press under Israeli occupation is more a matter of theory than actuality. Israeli officials in their statements claim that the Arab population under their occupation enjoy a great deal of liberty and freedom of expression. In their statements to the outside world, the Israelis try to portray their occupation as being as liberal as possible.[72] They claim that the Arabs of the occupied areas "have been brought into the 20th century as a result of occupation."[73]

Israel's major aim in the occupied areas has always been to establish normality as much as possible. "The military authorities have managed to normalize the situation," said General Vardi, "and this has enabled widespread development and increasing liberalization."[74]

General Shlomo Gazit, coordinator of the occupied territories, explains policies and practices as they are seen from the official side:

> Israeli propaganda in the occupied areas is propaganda by actions rather than by words; Israeli actions in establishing normal life, in liberalizing and normalizing everyday living, in opening free passage between the territories themselves, between them and Israel and between them and the Arab World are the best kinds of propaganda, and I think the results testify to that.[75]

As far as General Gazit is concerned, an Arab can hold whatever opinions he likes; he can intrigue with his friends so long as he does not provoke a riot. "Violence must be nipped long before it buds," he said.[76]

Commenting on the Arab press under occupation, the Israeli journalist Reuven Maroz wrote in the Hebrew paper Al Hamishmar, that it is fairly obvious that the publication of Arab newspapers is in Israel's

interest. "They create an atmosphere of normalization in these territories and a safety valve for criticism and self-expression."[77]

Since the Six Day War of 1967, there has been continuous criticism by Israeli scholars and leaders of the Israeli information policy concerning the treatment of the Arab population of the occupied areas. "Those who dealt with this subject ran into difficulties when confronted with the task of discussing the political rights of the Palestinian population," wrote Dan Bawly in the Jerusalem Post Weekly. He continued:

> The attempt to explain Israel's policy on the Palestinians was doomed to failure when Prime Minister Golda Meir and some of her leading ministers, for various reasons, swept the whole issue under the carpet, periodically repeating that: a. There is no such thing as a Palestinian people; b. The West Bank Arabs have no leaders with whom serious negotiations can be started.[78]

Professor Daniel Amit of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem wrote in "New Outlook that no one can say today that the path to peaceful coexistence between Israel and her Arab neighbors is through free discussion.

> Do Israeli activities in the (occupied) territories...really leave room for free discussion? What about the five no's of Dayan (Ha'aretz, September 10, 1973)? 1. Gaza will not be Egyptian. 2. The Golan Heights will not be Syrian. 3. There will be no Palestinian state. 4. We will not desert the settlements we have founded. 5. We will never depart from East Jerusalem.

Why Press Freedom?: In the opinion of many Arab editors, press freedom in the occupied areas serves the Israeli interests rather than those of Arab inhabitants. They believe that by allowing freedom of expression the Israelis can achieve the following aims:

(a) A free press will prevent the establishment of an underground press. A free criticism of the Israeli policy will make underground papers less appealing to the masses. To a certain extent this has proved to be true. The only underground paper available now is Al-

Watan, published by the Communist party in the West Bank. This paper has a low circulation and little impact on the population.[80]

(b) A free press will serve as an outlet for mass tension. In the absence of a free press many group organizations will be formed among the suppressed population.

(c) Occupation authorities work against the formation of any public opinion in the occupied territories to avoid any pressure from within. A free press, therefore, is exploited to keep the existing conflict in Arab public opinion regarding the future of the occupied territories. Israeli authorities encourage Arab writers to express their conflicting views in their local press. Many Arab writers don't agree on the major issue of the Palestinian State, and they reflect this in their writings, thus keeping the population puzzled.[81]

(d) Extreme Arab writers also are encouraged by Israeli authorities to justify their strong hold over the occupied territories and to convince Israeli people that military suppression is the only way to keep normality in these territories.[82]

(e) The Arab press can be used as a channel of propaganda for Israeli achievements in the occupied territories. News and pictures of the Israeli military governor and officials inaugurating new projects are continuously noticed in the Arab press. This press unintentionally helps establish in the minds of local readers the idea that occupation is aiming at their progress and welfare.[83]

* * *

Despite all these negative factors in the press, Arab editors feel there are positive aspects in the press which can be exploited for the

peoples' interest. Tahboub said: "I have a feeling that in my work with the press I offer many services to occupation. The press is a two-edged sword, and we should use one edge with the greatest efficiency." He believes that the major role of the press is to keep the conquered Arabs well informed and enlightened with their morale high. He thinks this can only be achieved by maintaining qualified Arab editors and journalists who bear the national responsibility to safeguard these positive aspects.[84]

Abu-Shilbayeh agrees with Tahboub and tries to justify his writings in the Israeli papers. He believes that Arab writers should try to communicate with the Israeli people through their mass media to explain to them the basic facts about the Arab cause and the Palestinian rights. In the long run, he thinks, an understanding Israeli public opinion might help the Palestinian people to achieve their independence and freedom.[85]

IX. Conclusion

The preceeding arguments by Arab editors tend to support the first hypothesis that press freedom under Israeli occupation is a two-edged sword. It seems, however, that the Israelis are gaining from their edge of the sword more than Arab editors do. By allowing a free press the Israelis are trying to achieve their goals in the occupied territories, namely, no public opinion, no tension, no underground press, but normalization and propaganda for a liberal and moderate occupation.

Arab editors, however, are trying to exploit this free press in keeping high the morale of the conquered Arab masses. In the post occupation period these editors might emerge from the experience more broad-minded and determined than ever to maintain the tradition of a free press,

unfortunately absent in most Arab countries.

It is apparent from the preceeding discussion that press freedom under Israeli occupation is a relative and controlled freedom. This freedom is allowed by authorities only to a limited extent. Strict censorship, detainment and imprisonment are used whenever deemed necessary. The Arab press, however, remains the only outlet for the thoughts and feelings of the million or so inhabitants of these areas. The responses of these newspapers to various recent events may, therefore, stand as a significant reflection of the feelings of the Arab population. Their editorials and articles have helped in keeping the morale of the suppressed people high and in destroying the fear barrier of both the Jordanian and Israeli authorities.

FOOTNOTES

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32. Muhammad Abu-Shilbayeh, "Wa Hasratahu Ya Quds," p. 100, (Arabic book published by the author in Jerusalem in August 1973).

33. Rejwan, op. cit.

34. Pryce-Jones, op. cit., p. 85.

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